THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) and (b) The financial results for the last three years are as under:—

1996-97 — Rs. 296.94 crores
1997-98 — Rs. 181.01 crores
1998-99 — Rs. 174.48 crores
(Provisional)

The losses of last three years come to a total of Rs. 652.43 crores.

(c) and (d) Constant efforts are being made to check this slide. Measures taken to turn around the Airline are as under:—

(i) Marketing efforts have been stepped up to generate additional revenue. (ii) Network rationalization and consolidation with emphasis placed on route profitability, (iii) Reduction in expenditure on outside repairs of aircraft by undertaking more in-house repairs, (iv) Several posts of India based officers abroad have been abolished, (v) Freeze on external recruitment in non-operational categories, (vi) Two voluntary schemes have been notified viz. shorter working week scheme and leave without pay/allowances scheme for a period of two years extendable upto five years.

The Disinvestment Commission in its VIII Report on Air India has inter alia recommended infusion of Government equity of Rs. 1000 crores and induction of a strategic partner on the basis of global bids. The recommendations of the Commission are under consideration of the Government.

Purchase of Turboprop by Indian Airlines

1233. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a serious controversy on purchase of Turboprop by Indian Airlines;

(b) whether it is a fact that Indian Airlines has opposed such purchase as it would adversely affect its own survival; and

(c) if so, what are Government's views on this?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Indian Airlines has submitted a Project

Report for induction of six ATR-42 aircraft. The matter is under consideration of the Government.

Retiring age of Air India Employees

1234. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether retiring age of Air India employees has been reduced from 60 to 58 years; and

(b) the steps taken including reduction of salaries and perks of employees, especially of pilots, cabin crew and engineers to ensure that the company runs into profit once again?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The salaries & perks of employees have not been reduced as these are determined for specific wage period by Agreement/ Settlements entered into with the concerned Unions/Associations/ Guilds. However, in order to improve the financial position of Air India, following steps have been taken:—

(i) Marketing efforts have been stepped up to generate additional revenue, (ii) Network rationalization and consolidation with emphasis placed on route profitability, (iii) Reduction in expenditure on outside repairs of aircraft by undertaking more in-house repairs, (iv) Several posts of India based officers abroad have been abolished, (v) Freeze on external recruitment in non-operational categories, (vi) Two voluntary schemes have been notified viz. shorter working week scheme and leave without pay/allowances scheme for a period of two years extendable upto five years.

Merger of IA and AI

†1235. SHRI D.P. YADAV: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal of merger of Indian Airlines into Air India is under consideration of Government; and

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†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.